ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of social control is investigated in this study, called *Invisible Social Control*. The organization in focus was a Swedish interorganizational committee, the EST group, appointed in 1976 to elaborate a system of economic compensation for dentists. A hermeneutic approach is applied in order to interpret the texts of the committee and reveal the factors controlling the involved organizations and authorities. A deeper understanding of the committee's decisions and arguments is made possible by drawing an analogy between the committee and Procrustes, a figure from the Greek myth of Theseus, which is used as a paradigm of interpretation. The Procrustean bed, symbolizing standardization by removing extremes, explains the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions in the committee's actions, in terms of conformity, envy, hostage, persuasion and suffering (elaborated in the study). The study illustrates the necessity of using symbols with cultural significance or content to recognize and understand significant patterns in organizational processes. This is made possible thanks to the hermeneutical theory of interpretation.